

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ABIDJA 06662 080954Z

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FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
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SUBJ: TENTATIVE FY 1976 TRADE PROMOTION PROGRAM

REF: STATE 172052

1. EMBASSY MOST ENCOURAGED BY REFTEL AND PLEASED WITH
INCLUSION ABIDJAN IN TRADE MISSION AND CATALOG SHOW
EVENTS DURING 1976. HOWEVER, WE WOULD LIKE TO COMMENT
ON FOLLOWING ASPECTS OF SCHEDULED SHOWS.

2. BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT CATALOG SHOW.
FEBRUARY 1976: EMBASSY BELIEVES THERE MAY BE SMALL MARKET
IN IVORY COAST FOR CERTAIN TYPES OF EQUIPMENT, GIVEN AMOUNT
OF CONSTRUCTION UNDERWAY IN ABIDJAN, BOUAKE, SAN PEDRO AND
YAMOISSOKRO AREAS. LOCAL FRENCH COMPANIES HOWEVER, HAVE
MANY FIRMS CONTACTS AND INSURED FINANCING FOR A
NUMBER OF PROJECTS. MOREOVER, MOST BUILDING CONSTRUCTION
(AS OPPOSED TO ROAD CONSTRUCTION) NOW DONE WITH FRENCH AND
OTHER EUROPEAN EQUIPMENT ALREADY IN COUNTRY. THERE IS CLEAR
ADVANTAGE TO CONTINUE USING SUCH EQUIPMENT AS IT IS
RELATIVELY NEW, AVAILABLE, SERVICEABLE, AND REPLACEMENT
COST WOULD BE HIGH. U.S. WILL PROBABLY BE COMPETITIVE
ON NEW SALES OF EQUIPMENT GIVEN NEW TARIFF POLICY, BUT
GOIC IS GIVING CAREFUL CONSIDERATION TO THE ENTIRE
QUESTION OF IMPORT CONTROLS AND MUST (AT LEAST FOR THE
FORESEEABLE FUTURE) SLOW DOWN IMPORTS TO CONTROL BALANCE
OF TRADE. THIS COULD LESSEN POTENTIAL FOR AMERICAN
SUPPLIERS. CATALOG SHOW WOULD DEFINITELY REQUIRE RENTAL
UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 ABIDJA 06662 080954Z

OF SPACE AT HOTEL IVOIRE PLUS WIDESPREAD ADVERTISING

TO OBTAIN MOST BENEFIT FROM PRESENTATION. EMBASSY/USIS WOULD COOPERATE FULLY ON THIS ACTIVITY BUT ENVISION SUBSTANTIAL FUNDS WOULD BE NEEDED FOR SUCCESSFUL MARKET PROMOTION. COST OF HOTEL SPACE FOR PRESENTATION ESTIMATED AT 150 TO 200 DOLLARS PER DAY. BELIEVE COMMERCE WILL HAVE TO EVALUATE COST-BENEFIT OF PROGRAM CAREFULLY.

3. COMPUTER RELATED BUSINESS EQUIPMENT TECHNICAL SALES SEMINAR APRIL 1976: EMBASSY WOULD LIKE TO RESERVE JUDGEMENT UNTIL DISCUSSIONS CAN BE HELD WITH APPROPRIATE PRIVATE AND GOVERNMENT END-USERS OF SUCH EQUIPMENT. ALL EQUIPMENT WOULD HAVE TO BE ADAPTABLE TO IBM MACHINERY SINCE IT IS ONLY COMPUTER EQUIPMENT USED IN IVORY COAST. QUESTION OCCURS WHETHER THIS WOULD CAUSE PROBLEMS IN RECRUITMENT FOR MISSION. AS AN ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATION, IVORY COAST IS ONE OF THE FEW COUNTRIES IN WEST AFRICA WITH EXCESS COMPUTER CAPACITY, COMBINED WITH LACK OF SKILLED MANPOWER WHICH WILL BE PROBLEM FOR SOME TIME TO COME. LATTER FACTOR MAY HAVE MORE RELEVANCE IN DEVELOPING INTEREST IN A TECHNICAL SALES SEMINAR OF THIS TYPE, BUT IF OBJECTIVE IS ALSO EXPORT DEVELOPMENT THERE IS ONLY VERY LIMITED OPPORTUNITY IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

4. BELIEVE IVORY COAST, GIVEN EMPHASIS ON AGRICULTURE AND PROCESSING OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS IN DEVELOPMENT PLAN WOULD BENEFIT MOST (AND COMMERCE WOULD ACHIEVE MOST IMPACT) FROM TRADE MISSIONS AND CATALOG SHOWS IN THIS FIELD. OF MOST INTEREST TO IVORY COAST WOULD BE FOOD PROCESSING AND PACKAGING CATALOG SHOW OR MISSION AND/OR AGRICULTURAL EQUIPMENT CATALOG SHOW OR MISSION. PERHAPS THE REPLACEMENT OF THE PROPOSED MISSION OR SHOWS WITH ONE OF THE ABOVE WOULD BETTER SERVE US COMMERCIAL INTERESTS IN IVORY COAST IN 1976.

5. FYI DATES FOR SHOWS PROPOSED FOR ABIDJAN IN REFTEL ARE EXCELLENT. DUE TO POLITICAL ACTIVITY (PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN NOVEMBER) EMBASSY WOULD HAVE DIFFICULTY SUPPORTING MISSIONS DURING SEPT-DEC.,
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PAGE 03 ABIDJA 06662 080954Z

PARTICULARLY IN OBTAINING APPOINTMENTS WITH LOCAL OFFICIALS AND BUSINESSMEN. DUE TO SUMMER VACATION SEASON, PROGRAMS HELD BETWEEN JUNE AND SEPTEMBER STAND LESS CHANCE OF SUCCESS THAN DURING NORMAL WORKING MONTHS. ABOVE FACTORS SHOULD BE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION IF ANY MODIFICATIONS ARE MADE FOR FY 76 PROGRAM. END FYI.

6. IN SUM, EMBASSY BELIEVES ONE CATALOG SHOW AND ONE MISSION

IN LIEU OF TWO CATALOG SHOWS BEST FOR MARKET IMPACT. BEST
MODIFICATION, WOULD SUBSTITUTE AGRICULTURAL EQUIPMENT
MISSION WITH FOOD PROCESSING CATALOG SHOW FOR PROPOSED
PROGRAMS (THOUGH DATES WOULD HAVE TO BE CHANGED.)
OF ACTIVITIES PROPOSED IN REFTEL, BELIVE COMPUTER
AND BUSINESS RELATED TECHNICAL SALES SEMINAR WOULD
GENERATE MOST LOCAL RESPONSE. MBASSY WOULD MAKE
EVERY EFFORT TO INSURE ADEQUATE LOCAL PARTICIPATION
IN EITHER CATALOG SHOW USDOC WOULD SEND, BUT STRONGLY
RECOMMENDS THAT AGRICULTURALLY ORIENTED MISSIONS HAVE
MORE APPLICABILITY TO THIS MARKET. EMBASSY HAS ALREADY
DONE MARKET RESEARCH FOR FOOD PROCESSING AND PACKAGING
MISSION. THIS WE BELIEVE ONLY UPDATE REQUIRED.

7. PLEASE ADVISE ASAP OF ANY MODIFICATIONS OR CHANGES
IN PROPOSED PROGRAM GIVEN ABOVE COMMENTS.
SMITH

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